

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 04476 302331Z

70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 OPR-02

PC-04 DRC-01 /143 W

----- 130196

O P 302200Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4235

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE NIACT

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4476

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, HO, ES

SUBJECT: HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR DEVELOPMENTS: TEMPERATURE RISES

1. SITUATION WITHIN COUNTRY REMAINS GENERALLY TRANQUIL ALTHOUGH RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING AT INCREASING PACE ABOUT ALLEGED INCIDENTS ON THE HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR BORDER AND PREPARATIONS FOR A RENEWED CONFLICT. FAS OFFICERS, FOR INSTANCE, ALLEGE THAT FIVE NATIONAL

GUARDSMEN WERE KILLED NOVEMBER 29 IN CLASH WITH HONDURANS NEAR LAS PALMAS. OTHER RUMORS CONTEND THAT FIGHTING ON THE BORDER IS ALREADY UNDERWAY, THAT RESERVES ARE BEING CALLED UP, ETC, WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO SUBSTANTIATE THESE ALLEGATIONS AND MILITARY OFFICERS VISITING CUARTELS AT SANTA ANA, SAN MIGUEL, LA UNION AND SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA IN PAST FEW DAYS HAVE FOUND SITUATION NORMAL. (SEPARATE DAO REPORT FOLLOWS)

2. GOES RELEASED STATEMENT NOVEMBER 29 JUSTIFYING ITS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PACT OF BOGOTA AND ITS NEW RESERVATIONS TO THE OBLIGATORY JURISDICTION PROVISIONS OF THE ICJ ACCORD, MUCH ALONG THE LINES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 04476 302331Z

STATED PREVIOUSLY BY PRESIDENT MOLINA. GOVERNMENT CONTENTS

DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PACT WAS TAKEN AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BY COMMITTEE OF SALVADORAN JURISTS, NOTES THAT ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF AMERICAN STATES HAVE EVER RATIFIED THE PACT (AND SOME OF THOSE WITH IMPOVANT RESERVATIONS), AND CONTENTS THAT EL SALVADOR HAD RECONSIDERED ITS POSITION IN VIEW OF CURRENT "REALITIES." GOES STRESSES, HOWEVER, THAT THESE STEPS DO NOT IMPLY THAT EL SALVADOR HAS REJECTED THE PRINCIPLE OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES AND NOTES THAT THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM, THE OAS, THE RIO TREATY AND THE UN ESTABLISH ADEQUATE MEANS OR SUCH SETTLEMENTS.

3. IN PRESS CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 29, FOREIGN MINISTER BORGONOVO REPEATED ABOVE POSITION. WHEN ASKED WHY THE GOES HAS WAITED 25 YEARS TO REVIEW ITS POSITION ON THE PACT OF BOGOTA, BORGONOVO CONTENTED THAT "WHEN A TREATY IS DORMANT, ONE DOES NOT SUBJECT IT TO APPROPRIATE ANALYSIS." BORGONOVO CONTENTED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS

CONTINUE IN MEXICO ON SCHEDULE AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT A DRAFT AGREEMENT WILL BE COMPLETED BY MID-DECEMBER.

4. OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES, AWARE THAT THE ISSUE OF THE BORDER AND ARBITRATION IS A POLITICALLY DANGEROUS ONE, HAVE MOVED QUICKLY TO SUPPORT MOLINA'S ACTION IN WITHDRAWING FROM THE PACT OF BOGOTA IN A RARE SHOW OF NATIONAL UNITY IN PRIVATE, ALL CONTEND THAT HONDURAS "HAD US TRAPPED" AND WAS GOING TO DEMAND ARBITRATION WHEN (AS MOST NOW BELIEVE) THE TALKS STUMBLERED ON THE BORDER DEMARCATION QUESTION. THEY FEEL THAT THE PRESIDENT ACTED IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST IN DENOUNCING THE JURIDICAL

RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THE PACT AND THE LEFT-OF-CENTER PDC AS WELL AS THE CONSERVATIVE FUDI HAVE ALREADY ENDORSED THE MOVE PUBLICLY. THE RIGHTIST PPS IS EXPECTED TO FOLLOW SUIT. MAVERICK PCN DEPUTY MOLINA PROPOSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY NOVEMBER 29 THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE BUDGET BE LEFT "OPEN" SO THAT THE ARMED FORCES COULD ADEQUATELY DEFEND THEMSELVES. HE CONTENTED THAT HONDURAS HAS RECENTLY ACQUIRED 15 JET AIRCRAFT, ADDITIONAL HEAVY ARTILLERY AND NUMEROUS AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 04476 302331Z

5. MEDIA TREATMENT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAS BEEN GENERALLY RESTRAINED, ALTHOUGH PRENSA GRAFICA, IN NOVEMBER 30 EDITION, CARRIES MISLEADING FRONT PAGE HEADLINE, "DANGER OF NEW WAR GROWS." INSIDE STORY REFERS TO ISRAELI/ARAB CONFLICT. DUE TO PRESIDENT MOLINA'S PERSONAL PLEA TO MEDIA OWNERS TO PLAY DOWN THE ISSUE, PRESSREPORTS HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO GOVERNMENT RELEASES AND INTERVIEWS CITED ABOVE. ONLY COMMENT HAS BEEN CONSERVATIVE DIARIO DE HOY WHICH CARRIED EDITORIAL NOVEMBER 29 CITING HONDURAS' PREVIOUS

SUCCESSES IN SETTLING BORDER DISPUTES WITH GUATEMALA, NICARAGUA AND THE U.S. AS EVIDENCE OF ITS DIPLOMATIC "AGILITY" AS WELL AS ITS THIRST FOR TERRITORY. EDITORIAL NOTES THAT EL SALVADOR CEDED TO HONDURAS ACCESS TO GULF OF FONSECA, WHICH IT HOLDS WAS TRADITIONALLY SALVADORAN. HOWEVER, IT CONTENDS THAT THAT IS AS FAR AS CENTRAL AMERICANISM WILL GO AND THAT NOT "ONE ADDITIONAL INCH" SHOULD BE CEDED TO HONDURAS BY ANY BORDER DEMARCATION PROCEDURE. EDITORIAL CONCLUDED POSITIVELY, NOTING THAT SALVADORAN BORDERS ARE OPEN TO HONDURANS AND THAT EL SALVADOR STANDS READY TO SUBSTITUTE "SEPARATIST TRIBALISM" (WHICH IT ALLEGES IS FOMENTED BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM) FOR THE "MAGNIFICENT REALITY OF A UNITED CENTRAL AMERICA."

6. COMMENT: DANGER NOW, OF COURSE, IS THAT INCREASINGLY WILD RUMORS AMONG THE POPULACE MAY CAUSE SALVADORANS TO FEEL THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PATIENT AND UNDERSTANDING WITH THEIR HONDURAN NEIGHBORS LONG ENOUGH AND THAT SOME HARD LINE PUBLIC STANCE IS REQUIRED TO ASSERT THEIR NATIONAL DIGNITY AND THAT THIS, IN TIME COULD FORCE GOES TO UNDERTAKE SOME SIGNIFICANT MOBILIZATION STEPS, WHICH WOULD FURTHER FEED RUMOR MILL AND PROVOKE REACTION FROM THE OTHER SIDE. HOPEFULLY, THE GOVERNMENT WILL MOVE PROMPTLY TO CLEAR THE AIR AND CALM THE PUBLIC MOOD. PRESIDENT MOLINA STRESSED TO ME HIS FULL AWARENESS OF NEED TO AVOID PROVOCATIONS (SEE SAN SALVADOR 4475) AND HIS CLEAR UNDERSTANDING WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ AVELLANO THAT A MILITARY CONFRONTATION MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COST.
MOSKOWITZ

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, BORDER INCIDENTS, BOUNDARY CLAIMS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SANSAA04476
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973112/aaaaabci.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <17-Jan-2002 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR DEVELOPMENTS: TEMPERATURE RISES
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, HO, ES
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005